

You stated that you have done research on Civil War soldiers buried in your town. What is their story as you know it and why do you think it is important to keep these stories alive?

MM While driving home from the Fall Muster last year I started to wonder if any of the Canadians who fought were from my area. Sure enough, with a bit of research I found two Civil War veterans buried in the small town where I live.

James Beach Moore was a 19 year old from Burgessville, Ontario attending theological school outside New York City in 1861. He joined up and was made an aide-de-camp to General Phil Kearney. He claimed he never fired a shot but once had a horse shot out from under him during the Peninsula Campaign. He survived his one year of service, returned home and became a Baptist minister. He founded several churches throughout southern Ontario. When he died in 1931 at the age of 90 he was the oldest active Baptist minister in Ontario and Quebec.

Theodore Sharp was from Hamilton, Ontario. He served with the 5th Michigan Volunteer Infantry from 1861 to 1864. He was wounded three times fighting at the Stony Hill on Day Two. After the war he lived in Waterford with his wife and four children. He died at the young age of 41 in 1878.

The memory of these men, and others like them, are what keep history alive. Dates, politics, and battle maps are necessary for basic understanding but it is the personal stories where we find real insight into our history.

What do you most enjoy about Friends of Gettysburg events?

MM The wonderful thing about Gettysburg is that, regardless of background, I have one thing in common with everyone I meet there. Friends' events are a great equalizer in that respect. Poignant, given that the whole point of the war was equality. Through the Friends' events I've met people I would never have met otherwise.

What have you been surprised to learn as a Friends of Gettysburg member?

MM For many years I had the idea that the battlefield was somehow frozen in time. I never gave much thought to the work that goes into its preservation.

My first visit to Gettysburg was 37 years ago and I've visited regularly since. I've seen many changes take place on the field and in the town. The work that the Friends do in conjunction with the NPS has been extraordinary, particularly over the past few years with the removal of the old Visitor Center, rehabilitation of Ziegler's Grove, the removal of the Quality Inn on Chambersburg Pike (alas, my favorite place to stay) and the removal and planting of trees.

The working relationship between the Friends and NPS is an example of how well government and private organizations can work together.

What current project of the Gettysburg Foundation are you most passionate about?

MM The ongoing effort to bring the battlefield to its 1863 condition is incredible. When I visited last fall and saw the amount of dirt that was moved to rebuild the Zeigler ravine I was astonished; work like that does not come cheap.

As someone who focuses on how the topography affected the battle those efforts are very important to me. To be able to stand near the Stony Hill and see the same view Theodore Sharp saw as the Confederates stepped out of the woods a mile away is a remarkable thing.

At the Fall Muster last year I got involved with the Adopt-a-Position Program run by the NPS. Alyce Evans, the project coordinator, was generous enough to work out a plan whereby I can help out in some way when I'm visiting. Volunteering is important to me and without the Friends I would never have known of this opportunity at Gettysburg.

Where is your favorite spot on the battlefield?

MM Along the driveway of the John Weikert farm is the monument to the 62nd New York Infantry. On the reverse of the monument is a bronze tablet depicting the capture of two artillery pieces. I don't know if it's by design or by weathering but the figures in the background of the picture are ethereal and that seems so appropriate given the setting. Also, closer to the Wheatfield Road is a flat rock where I like to sit and eat lunch while enjoying the peace of the place.